RECORD OF DECISION

MT. BAKER-SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST

Land and Resource Management Plan

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

King, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties Washington State

USDA Forest Service

June 1990

RECORD OF DECISION

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

BASIS AND NEED FOR DECISION

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision and rationale for approving the Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Throughout this ROD, I have used some technical terms which may be foreign to a large segment of the public. In some cases I have been able to explain the term, but in other cases explanations would have made this document unnecessarily long. The reader is encouraged to refer to the final, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Glossary which defines terms used in this document.

A draft EIS and proposed Forest Plan were filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on January 8, 1988. Additional details on meetings, notices, and documents preceding the final EIS and Forest Plan are available in the final EIS, Appendices A and J.

Authority

The final EIS and Forest Plan were developed under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and its implementing regulations (SB CFR 219). The final EIS satisfies requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500).

The Forest Plan is part of a framework for long-range planning established by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA). The Forest Plan establishes general direction for 10 to 15 years. and must be revised at least every 15 years [SB CFR 219.10(q)]. The Forest Plan replaces previous resource management plans, including the:

Multiple Use Plan, Glacier Ranger District
Multiple Use Plan, Baker River Ranger District
Multiple Use Plan, Darrington Ranger District
Multiple Use Plan, Monte Cristo Ranger District
Multiple Use Plan, Skykomish Ranger District
Multiple Use Plan, North Bend Ranger District
Multiple Use Plan, White River Ranger District
Timber Management Plan, Mt. Baker National Forest
Timber Management Plan, Snoqualmie National Forest
Wilderness Management Plan, Glacier Peak Wilderness
Land Adjustment Plan, Snoqualmie National Forest
Land Adjustment Plan, Mt. Baker National Forest

All outstanding and future permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other instruments for occupancy and use of lands included in this Forest Plan will be brought into agreement with this Plan, subject to valid existing rights of the parties involved. This will be done as soon as practicable, and generally within three years of the date of this Plan.

AFFECTED AREA

The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is located on the west slopes of the Cascade Range of northwestern Washington. The planning area includes the entire Forest located in portions of King, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties.

The Forest is currently headquartered in Seattle, but will relocate to Mountlake Terrace in the summer of 1990. Ranger District Offices are in Sedro Wooley, Darrington, Skykomish, North Bend, and Enumclaw.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Pursuant to the intent of NFMA, the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest conducted a large-scale public involvement program Format activities included a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS printed, in the Federal Register, a format public comment period on draft documents, and many meetings, presentations, and information distributions. In addition to formal activities, Forest employees informally explained the purpose of the Forest Plan and how to effectively participate in the process. Special public involvement activities were also conducted for the Hydrologic Cumulative Effects analysis process (See final EIS, Appendix H and J).

On the basis of public response received on the draft EIS, the Forest conducted new Wild and Scenic Rivers eligibility and suitability studies, modified some alternatives, and developed two new alternatives. The Forest also performed additional analyses and changed some management emphases in the Preferred Alternative. My staff and I were briefed on the public comments, the final EIS, and the Forests changes to the draft Forest Plan. I used this information to make my decision.

Issues

Land and resource management planning began with identification of issues and concerns through contacts with local civic and community organizations: individuals, local, state and federal agencies: private industries; adjacent landowners: various interest groups, American Indian tribes, and Forest Service employees. Public comments and management concerns were analyzed, and ten major issues were identified. Between the draft EIS and the final EIS, the ten issues were revisited and adjustments made based on responses to the draft EIS. The primary adjustments were to more clearly describe the issues, combine issues that were closely linked, and develop separate issues where a facet of a previous issue had become more visible and important to the public. As a result of these adjustments, nine issues which are described in detail in the final EIS, Chapter 1 and Forest Plan, Chapter III are specifically addressed in this ROD in Section III, Rationale for the Decisions. The issues deal with:

- Development versus Nondevelopment of the Forest
- Timber Supply
- Old Growth Ecosystems and Fish/Wildlife/Plant Diversity
- American Indian Religious and Cultural Use
- Recreation Opportunities
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Management of Municipal Watersheds
- Effects of Timber Management and Related Activities
- Adjacent and Intermingled Lands

WHAT THE FOREST PLAN IS, AND IS NOT

As a tong-range strategy for managing the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, the Forest Plan and accompanying final EIS are programmatic. The Forest Plan provides management direction to produce goods, services and uses in a way that maximizes long-term net public benefits. It is not a plan for day-to-day administrative activities of the Forest; it does not address such matters as vehicle and equipment management or organizational structure. The Forest Plan emphasizes application of various management practices to achieve multiple-use goals and objectives in an environmentally sound and economically efficient manner

It is vital for the reviewer to understand what the Forest Plan does not do: it does NOT:

- Maximize any single resource use or public service;
- Propose the use of any resource beyond the physical or biological capability of the land to sustain that use;
- Propose management of any resource based solely on values in the market place.

The Forest Plan does not emphasize site-specific decisions, but through Standards and Guidelines and Management Area direction, it significantly influences design, execution, and monitoring of site-specific activities (see Forest Plan, Chapter IV).

Standards and Guidelines are principles specifying conditions or levels of environmental quality to be achieved. They are the rules that govern our resource management practices and are the key to successful implementation of the plan. Standards and Guidelines will not be violated to achieve annual targets. A Management Area consists of one or more areas of land which have similar management objectives and a common management prescription.

SECTION II

DECISIONS

SUMMARY OF THE DECISION

My decision is to approve, adopt, and implement the Forest Plan which accompanies the final EIS. This decision is referred to as Alternative J (Preferred Alternative) for management of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Alternative J is a modification of the draft EIS Preferred Alternative and is a response to public comments and updated information and methodologies. Differences between the draft Preferred Alternative and final Preferred Alternative include more acres allocated to dispersed recreation opportunities: more acres included in Spotted Owl Habitat Areas; more protection for water resources; more acres allocated to scenic viewshed protection; recommendations for increased Wild and Scenic River designation; recommendation for increased numbers of Special Areas; protection of more old-growth; fewer acres allocated to timber production; and more acres maintained in an undeveloped condition.

The Forest Plan establishes multiple-use goals and desired future conditions. These are discussed in detail in the Forest Plan, Chapter IV.

Although the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) has dropped from the level in the DEIS Preferred Alternative, I have decided that a Supplement to the DEIS is not necessary for a variety of reasons. The rationale for this decision is based on my review of the staff paper discussing the socioeconomic effects of the reduced ASQ, all of which are disclosed in the ROD and FEIS, Chapter IV. The staff paper also reviewed the CEQ regulations requiring the issuance of a supplement. This rationale is set forth below.

First, the effects were carefully analyzed utilizing the most current available data and are fully disclosed in the planning documents. Based on this information, I conclude that the reduction in the ASQ will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Further, the reduction was based on response to the public comments on the Draft EIS and updated information and methodologies, which came to light after the Draft was released.

Second, I reviewed the CEQ Regulations. I find that the changes made between the Draft Preferred Alternative and the Alternative Selected in this Record of Decision are not substantial in terms of the negative impacts on the human environment. Rather, the environmental impacts are lessened and the Selected Alternative provides for recovery from the environmental effects of past development activities. I do not project substantially different environmental impacts from the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS; the environmental impacts will occur at lower intensities, less frequently, and will be mitigated more carefully.

Third, the environmental circumstances today are not significantly different than at the time of the Draft EIS. The areas in identified in the Plan as being in an environmentally unsatisfactory condition were largely in that condition when the Draft EIS was issued. I do not project the Selected Alternative will significantly change the circumstances on these lands in the near future.

Fourth, no significantly new information was used in developing the Selected Alternative. The Forest simply updated existing information and methodologies. This resulted in applying the information differently in response to public comments received on the Draft EIS.

As set forth in this Record of Decision and the FEIS, Chapter IV, I have given the environmental consequences of this Forest Plan the “hard look” required by the U.S. Supreme Court and am making an informed decision. Further, my decision not to issue a Supplement to the Draft EIS is based on the foregoing rationale, which is also set forth in the Staff paper in the Planning Record, and is not an arbitrary and capricious decision. Agency decisions made in this manner are accorded the most extreme deference by the courts

ELEMENTS OF THE DECISION

The program decisions I make here are accompanied by the necessary supporting environmental analysis and disclosure required by law and regulation. Additional environmental analysis for these decisions is neither expected nor required. These decisions may be revisited or reassessed during implementation, but they do not have to be. These decisions establish or identify the following:

- Forest-wide goals and objectives.

- Forest-wide desired future condition.
- Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.
- Management Area goals and location.
- Management Area desired future condition.
- Management Area Standards and Guidelines.
- Monitoring program and evaluation process.
- Lands suitable and selected for timber harvesting.
- Forest-wide allowable sale quantity.
- Location of additional Special Areas (SA'sJ.
- Incorporation of the Alpine Lakes Area Land Management Plan and the Skagit Wild and Scenic River Management Plan.

Intended Activities

I also intend to carry out certain scheduled activities. Unlike the programmatic decisions listed above, these are not accompanied by all, supporting NEPA analysis and disclosure required by law and regulation. Additional environmental analysis will be done during Forest Plan implementation. These proposed and probable activities are displayed in activity schedules in the Forest Plan, Appendices A through K.

It is important to note that all proposals in the Forest Plan can be accomplished from physical, biological, economic, social, and legal perspectives. It is not certain that these proposals will be accomplished. First, outputs specified in the Forest Plan are estimates and projections based on available inventory data and assumptions.

Second, all activities, many of which are interdependent, may be affected by annual budgets. The Forest Plan is implemented through various site-specific projects, such as timber sales, wildlife habitat improvements, and campground development. Budget allocations for any given year covered by the Forest Plan may cause projects to be rescheduled. However, the goals and land use allocations described in the Forest Plan would not change unless the Forest Plan itself were changed. If actual budgets are significantly different from those projected over a period of several years, the Forest Plan may have to be amended and, consequently, would reflect different outputs and environmental conditions. The significance of changes related to budgets or other factors is determined in the context of the particular circumstances.

During implementation, when the various projects are designed, site-specific analyses are performed. These analyses will be disclosed in an environmental document and may lead to an amendment or revision of the Forest Plan. Any resulting documents are to be tiered to the final EIS for the Forest Plan, pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.28.

Recommendations

I also am recommending certain decisions to others with the authority to make those final decisions. Like my final decisions, recommendations are accompanied by all supporting NEPA analysis and disclosure required by law and regulation. However, authority to make a final decision on these issues is not mine. If others with higher authority accept the recommendation, the resulting final decision will not ordinarily be revisited or reassessed by the Forest Service during implementation of the Forest Plan.

My recommendations include identification of:

- Location of additions to the Research Natural Area system.
- Additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

SECTION III

RATIONALE FOR THE DECISIONS

I approached my decisions by first looking at major issues and public comments on them and then comparing the responses of various alternatives to the issues. I present my rationale for these decisions in the same manner below.

During the period between the draft and final EIS, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest employees held numerous meetings with interested members of the public. Forest employees used the information gathered at these meetings along with written responses to the draft EIS to develop the alternatives presented in the final EIS. Information gathered from the meetings and written responses were also used to develop recommendations to me.

In arriving at these decisions, my staff and I were thoroughly briefed on the Plan and alternatives presented in the FEIS. I gave particular attention to how the selected alternative responded to public issues and management concerns. In my judgment, Alternative J maximizes net public benefits and best responds to the issues. It balances adequate protection of the environment with production of both monetary and non-monetary resource outputs.

RATIONALE FOR RESOLVING EACH ISSUE

The response of each alternative to the nine major issues was a primary consideration in choosing the selected alternative. The alternatives and their resolution of issues are discussed below, and are disclosed in greater detail in the final EIS, Chapters I and II.

ISSUE 1: Development versus Nondevelopment of the Forest

Two major questions emerged in assessing this issue:

- How should the released, “roadless” areas as identified in the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation II (RARE II) be allocated and how will the resources be managed?

- At what rate should the Forest Service enter those “roadless” areas that are allocated for development?

Portions of all twenty-five roadless areas identified in the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) remain unroaded at this time. Of the 785,000 acres identified as roadless in RARE II, 341,000 acres were added to the National Wilderness Preservation System by the 1984 Washington State Wilderness Act. Approximately 403,000 acres of the remaining roadless acres outside of Wilderness on the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest are currently unroaded. The other 42,000 acres of RARE II roadless areas no longer remain roadless as a result of development activities including timber harvesting and road building since 1984. Boundaries and current acreages of roadless areas are displayed in the final EIS, Appendix C.

The allocation and management of unroaded areas remains a highly controversial issue. These areas equal approximately 51 percent of the roadless areas inventoried in RARE II, and 23 percent of the net Forest acres. These roadless lands were released from wilderness consideration by the 1984 Act. However, the legislation did not settle the issue.

The commercial forest land within the roadless areas was included in the calculation of the annual potential yield in the amended Timber Management Plans. However, timber on these lands was not available for harvest from 1972

until passage of the Washington State Wilderness Act in 1984. As a result, harvest levels between 1972 and 1984 were based on a larger land base than was actually available for harvest. Thus, for more than ten years, timber harvest on the Forest was concentrated on about 1/2 of the land base used to determine the annual potential yield in the Timber Management Plans. Approximately 155,700 acres, or 39 percent, of the unroaded areas are tentatively suitable for timber production.

In response to the draft EIS, some organizations and individuals referred to the roadless areas, but many more focused less on the RARE II remnants and more on the general issue of whether the remaining unroaded and undeveloped lands on the Forest should be managed for commodity production/roaded recreation or remain undeveloped. This key issue encompasses facets of nearly all the other Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities.

Some elected officials, State agencies, environmental groups, many hikers, some Indian Tribes, and wildlife organizations want the unroaded areas to remain undeveloped and unroaded. Their concerns include: protection of wildlife habitat and old growth (especially low-elevation old growth), providing non-motorized recreation opportunities, and protection of water, soil, cultural, and scenic values. They also want to maintain the option of future consideration for wilderness. A number of individuals and groups support a proposal for Sackcountry Areas, roughly corresponding to five roadless areas.

Timber companies, trade organizations, energy-related industries, and some individuals feel that the 1984 Washington State Wilderness Act “released” these lands for multiple uses. They are concerned that nondevelopment will limit the amount of timber and minerals available for use, affect the local and regional economy, and lead to future wilderness designation. Many people felt there is a need for more motorized access to the roadless areas, to encourage recreation. Individuals, primarily living outside the Seattle metropolitan area, are concerned about saving timber jobs.

The Forest evaluated a range of alternatives that would maintain various amounts of the areas as undeveloped. The range of roadless area assigned to unroaded allocations in the alternatives is from 54 percent to 93 percent. Alternatives with lesser amounts of roadless areas assigned to unroaded allocations were not considered reasonable for several reasons. First, fifty-five of the parcels are less than 1,000 acres in size and are generally “slivers” that remained after Congress established the wilderness boundaries in the Washington Wilderness Act of 1984. Secondly, the general character of many of the roadless parcels can be described as high elevation, steep terrain, with difficult or impossible development opportunities. Also, as stated above, only 155,700 acres of tentatively suited timber lands occur in the roadless areas. Finally, significant amounts of roadless areas are needed to provide wildlife habitat to meet management requirements.

It is my decision to proceed with implementation of the selected alternative which directs that approximately 77 percent (309,000 acres) of inventoried roadless area acres be maintained in a roadless character. The remaining approximately 23 percent (94,000 acres) are allocated to various levels of development involving roading and production of both market and nonmarket outputs to meet the demands for a broad range of Forest goods and services. Only 15% of the tentatively suitable lands are allocated to non-development.

The acres to be managed for multiple uses in an unroaded condition increased about 50,000 acres between the draft and final EIS. The increase is the net result of several changes in allocations made between the draft and final EIS. While some areas allocated to development in the draft EIS preferred alternative are allocated to unroaded uses in the final EIS preferred alternative, there are also areas that have been changed from unroaded allocations in the draft EIS to development allocations in the final EIS. Overall in the selected alternative, net increases occurred in allocations to unroaded uses, including: dispersed recreation uses, spotted owl habitat, special areas (botanic,

scenic), pileated woodpecker and pine marten habitat, mountain goat habitat, and mountain hemlock zone. Many of the changes in allocations involved roadless areas. The multiplicity of uses accommodated in these unroaded allocations cannot be provided for in designated wilderness. Uses that may occur in the unroaded areas that cannot occur in wilderness include structural wildlife habitat improvements; recreation facility developments such as trail shelters, sanitary facilities, and primitive camp sites; and under certain conditions, special uses such as small hydroelectric facilities and electronic sites. In addition, the use of mechanical equipment will be allowed in the maintenance and administration of lands in the unroaded allocations.

Management of the roadless areas on the Forest will proceed according to the land use allocation. Approximately 20,000 acres of the 94,000 acres of roadless area allocated to development will be affected by development (including timber sales) in the next 10 years and no longer meet the definition of roadless as used in RARE II. By the end of fifteen years. an additional 12,000 acres of roadless areas will be affected by development. Proposed development activities scheduled for roadless areas will receive appropriate environmental analysis and documentation before they are implemented

I make this decision with the firm belief that it provides an equitable balance between development and preservation of roadless areas. Land use allocations are displayed on the Forest Plan Map and additional discussion of roadless areas can be found in Chapter II and Appendix C of the final EIS. In addition, all of the roadless areas, whether or not they are allocated to roadless or developed uses, will be managed for a variety of uses and not as wilderness.

ISSUE 2: Timber Supply

This issue includes the following major questions:

- What is the capability arid suitability of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest to produce timber?

- What should the timber harvest level be considering all, resources on the forest and their relationship to social, economic, and environmental factors including local, regional, and national demands?

Related issues and concerns are:

- How the National Forest timber supply affects jobs and the local and regional economy?
- What is the rate of harvest of old growth? (See discussion on page ROD-12)
- What is the rate of entry into the unroaded areas? (See previous section)
- What are the social and environmental effects?
- How will wood residue be utilized?

The 1953 Timber Management Plans address timber volume on the basis of board-foot measure. As amended in 1984 in response to the Washington State Wilderness Act, the Timber Management Plans projected an annual potential yield of 203.8 million board feet (MMBF). This included 7 PJWBF of salvage material. These terms are defined in the final EIS, Glossary. Potential yield (PY) in the 1953 Plans was calculated using different assumptions, land base, yield tables, utilization standards, etc. than used to calculate ASQ in this Forest Plan The two terms are not directly comparable. PY is most comparable to Timber Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ) because both PY and TSPQ include salvage (dead) volume; ASQ includes only net live (green) volume. The potential yield in the amended Timber Management Plans assumed that all tentatively suited lands in the roadless areas not included

in the wildernesses would be available for timber production. Actual annual harvest of chargeable timber averaged 230 M~BF for the period of 1979 to 1988. The draft Forest Plan proposed an average annual ASQ of 34.8 million cubic feet (MMCF) (170 MMBF).

Many of the issues raised and subjects discussed during the planning process affect ASQ. Some of these issues include: land selected as suitable for timber production; silvicultural practices; cumulative effects on other resources - especially watersheds, fish and wildlife; achieving other resource objectives; and effects on jobs and local communities.

Public opinion is divided as to appropriate sale level for the Forest. Support for maintaining or increasing the timber supply comes from timber industry (management & employees). some elected officials, some community leaders, businesses dependent on the timber industry, county school boards, and economic development agencies. Many individuals want the timber supply to be maintained, primarily to protect jobs. Many individuals, environmentalists, some recreation users, wildlife and some hunting interests, fishing organizations, Indian tribes, some community leaders, and State Wildlife agencies strongly support restricting or reducing the timber harvest, especially in low-elevation old growth Their concerns include protecting roadless areas from development, and the effects of timber harvest and related activities on wildlife, fisheries, water quality, soils, scenery, and recreation opportunities.

The Forest's five-county zone of influence including Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties, Washington contains a very large population (2.6 million) and a highly diversified economy. These five counties account for over 60 percent of all wage and salary employment in the State of Washington. Employment in the forestry and lumber and wood products manufacturing sectors account for less than one and one-half percent of employment in the five counties. By individual counties, Skagit County had over four percent of its wage and salary jobs in these sectors in 1988. Whatcom, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties had between two and three percent of their employment in the forestry and lumber and wood products manufacturing sectors. King County employment in those sectors was less than one percent of total employment in 1988. The forest products industry has already experienced major changes over the last decade. A shakeout of marginal mills plus extensive modernization, coupled with new products and expanding markets have led to high levels of wood products in the past three years, but with about 25 percent fewer employees than required for similar output levels in the late 1970's. This trend in employment reduction is expected to continue, as new processes and technologies emerge in wood products manufacturing, regardless of the ASQ set by this Plan.

The Forest considered alternatives with 1st-decade average annual ASQ's ranging from 13.8 MMCF (65 MMBF) to 41.7MMCF (204 MMBF) in the final EIS. No alternative was developed with an annual average ASQ above 41.7 MMCF (204 MMBF) since that level is achieved in the No Change Alternative which does not incorporate all the NFMA management requirements and therefore could not be implemented. For details of the timber management program for the various alternatives see FEIS Chapter II, page 11-75. The draft EIS considered alternatives with 1st-decade average annual ASQ's ranging from 16.1 MMCF (79 MMBF) to 41.7 MMCF (204 MMBF). The lowering of the range of ASQ levels considered is due in large part to changes in management requirements and methods of meeting management requirements made between the DEIS and FEIS, to be responsive to comments received on the DEIS. Management requirements that were changed between the DEIS and FEIS included increasing the northern spotted owl habitat requirements from 1,000 acres per Spotted Owl Habitat Area to 2,200 acres per Spotted Owl Habitat Area. Also the amount of habitat set aside for mountain goat was increased between the DEIS and FEIS to correct an error made in the DEIS. Another major change in ASQ resulted from a change in the method of meeting the water quality management requirement. As a result of review and comment on the DEIS, the Forest revisited the methods used to meet the water quality management requirement. It was apparent the methods used in the DEIS

would not assure compliance with the various water quality laws. To insure compliance, the Forest developed and implemented a hydrologic cumulative effects analysis process. See Chapter II of the PUS, Chapter III of Appendix B of the FEIS, and Appendix H of the FEIS for a full discussion of management requirements and the effects of meeting those requirements.

Two alternatives in the draft EIS proposed to manage timber on harvest schedules that would depart from nondeclining flow. Public comments generally opposed departure schedules because the public perceived these alternatives could pose unacceptable risks of adverse environmental impacts and not provide timber supplies needed to sustain local economies over the long-term. A departure alternative was also believed to be inappropriate since the Forest has been in a “de facto” departure mode during most of the 1970’s and early 80’s. This was the result of riot being able to harvest timber from roadless areas but basing harvest levels as though those areas would eventually become available.

After considering all factors, it is my decision to implement the selected alternative with a 1st-decade ASQ of 22.4 MMCF (108 MMBF) annually. Tree species offered for sale will be mixed conifer and hardwoods. The selected alternative manages timber on a nondeclining flow harvest schedule. I selected this harvest level because it reflects a balance between jobs, demand for wood products, income to the Treasury, and protection of the various nonmarket values desired by Forest users.

ASQ will be monitored and controlled on the basis of cubic-foot measure for the Forest Plan. Board-foot volume associated with the cubic-foot volume (i.e., board foot/cubic foot conversion ratio) varies from stand to stand depending on the size and form of the trees. Both board-foot and cubic-foot measure are displayed here, since board-foot has been and continues to be the customary unit of measure. The stands expected to be harvested in the plan period will yield approximately 108 M~BF per year associated with the ASQ of 22.4 MMCF. This will be used as a goal in the early part of the plan period; the transition from use of board-foot measure to use of cubic-foot measure should be made during this plan period.

The annual ASQ of 22.4 MMCF (108 MMBF) of timber under this plan is the average upper limit of chargeable wood to be sold from suitable Forest land during the first decade of the planning period. It is not an actual proposal for timber sale offerings. The annual timber sale offerings also include non-chargeable material and depend on budget appropriations, multiple-use objectives and market conditions.

Chargeable volume, ASQ, is comprised of categories of timber which were used in making growth and yield predictions during development of the plan. Chargeable volume, ASQ, is from those lands designated as being suitable for timber production. Other non-chargeable volume, not used in yield calculations because it did not meet Regional utilization standards, or standards for soundness, or is mortality salvage, or because it is harvested from lands not suitable for timber production, may also be sold as part of the annual Timber Sale Program Quantity (TSPQ). TSPQ is made up of the ASQ plus those non-chargeable items listed above. Standards and Guidelines for the Management Areas allow for limited situations (such as catastrophic loss) when volume will be removed from lands not suitable for timber production (e.g. salvage from a Special Area). Generally, this is only done when removal of the timber would promote the goals and desired future condition of the management area.

To achieve the TSPQ, yearly targets are developed. These yearly timber targets can be higher or lower than the average annual ASQ, provided the chargeable volume does not cumulatively exceed the ASQ level set by the Plan over the first decade.

In addition to the ASQ, I estimate that 3.1 MMCF (14 MMBF) of mortality salvage and material unsuitable for sawlogs will be offered annually during the 1st decade. This material includes the approximate historic level of salvage, firewood, posts and poles, as well as a small amount of cull logs and chips.

Timber will be managed on about 348,000 acres, of which about 49% will be managed on long rotations of 100 years or more, to meet nontimber resource objectives. Approximately 2,865 acres are projected to be clearcut annually. Precommercial thinning is scheduled to occur on approximately 1,000 acres annually. Commercial thinning is scheduled to occur on about 200 acres annually to improve stand density and species mix. These terms are defined in the final EIS, Glossary. Approximately 6.1 MMCF (29 MMBF), or 27 percent of the average annual ASQ depends on the application of projected intensive management practices, including thinning, fertilization, and planting of genetically superior seedlings. If these intensive management practices are not carried out, because of inadequate funding or other scheduling priorities, the ASQ will be reduced and the Plan will be amended. The ASQ includes volume scheduled from inventoried roadless areas and from elsewhere on the Forest. If the volume scheduled from the inventoried roadless areas cannot be achieved, that volume will not be replaced by volume scheduled elsewhere. Average annual volume scheduled from inventoried roadless areas is estimated to be 6.3 MMCF (30 MMBF), which accounts for 28 percent of the total ASQ. A full discussion of the timber management program for the selected alternative is presented in the Forest Plan, Chapter 4, page 4-48.

In the selected alternative, approximately 32,000 acres are allocated to the mountain hemlock zone management area. It is my decision to conduct a study in that management area to determine what portion, if any, of the mountain hemlock zone can be successfully reforested and thus returned to the tentatively suitable land base. To carry out this study, a total of 250 acres of this management area will be harvested (in 25 plots of approximately equal size) to test various silvicultural systems. This study will be completed within 15 years.

Even-aged management will be the primary silvicultural system, because it is well suited, ecologically and economically, for timber management of the commercial tree species found in the major species zones of the Forest. Those zones are: 1) Western hemlock; 2) Pacific silver fir; and 3) Mountain hemlock and subalpine fir. All of the ASQ assumes the use of even-aged silvicultural practices (Final EIS, Appendix F, Selection of Harvest Cutting Method). Uneven-aged silviculture practices will be considered in the project planning process as individual stands are investigated for harvest opportunities. Actual selection of harvest methods - clearcut, selection or shelterwood - will be made at the project level, based on site-specific conditions and Management Area objectives. Factors to be considered in choosing togging methods include cost effectiveness, protecting inherent site productivity, and satisfying management objectives for a stand.

The Forest is in the midst of completing an updated vegetation inventory. Preliminary data for old growth is expected to be available for use in late 1990 or early 1991. Final data and information for managed stands, mature and over-mature stands, and the vegetative resource inventory is scheduled to be available in 1995. A comparison will be made of the timber stand information used in the forest planning process (based on a 1976 inventory) and the information from the new inventory including the preliminary data to determine if the Plan's ASQ can be achieved. If differences between the inventories are judged to be significant by the Forest Supervisor, adjustments may be made to the projected ASQ and a Plan amendment issued.

ISSUE 3: Old-Growth Ecosystems and Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

This issue can be addressed by answering the question:

> What management direction is needed and where should action be taken that will maintain and/or enhance old growth and diversity to meet multiple use objectives?

The response to this question is broken into two separate sections: Old Growth Ecosystems and Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities.

Old Growth Ecosystems

The future of old-growth is a major issue on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and there is growing national interest. In the past, much of the focus for this issue has been spotted-owl habitat; it now has a much wider scope. Its value in providing biological diversity, wildlife and fisheries habitat, recreation, aesthetics, water quality, as well as industrial raw material received considerable public comment in response to the draft US.

Environmental groups, wildlife societies and organizations, many individuals, Indian Tribes, and State wildlife agencies want the remaining old-growth forests protected. Old growth is also important to American Indians for religious and cultural purposes.

Timber company representatives, industry trade associations, some State and local agencies, and many individuals feel these resources are an important contribution to timber production and maintaining local economies. Some feel that converting these stands into second growth timber is important for increasing long-term forest productivity.

The issue is more complex because of the lack of a widely accepted definition of old growth. Old-growth stands can be defined by age, by stand condition, by diameter, by ecological characteristics, by a combination of some or all of those factors. The most recent timber inventory completed on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie in 1976 was based on tree type and size.

Recently, the public and scientific community have focused on a definition of old growth based on the structural components of the stand. Several of the structural components are of key importance in an old-growth forest, including: individual, live, large, dead, down logs in streams: standing dead trees or snags; large, dead, down logs on the land: and multi-storied canopy of mixed species. These structural features are unique to an old-growth forest ecosystem, setting it apart from young growth and, especially from managed stands. Most of the distinctive compositional and functional features of old-growth forests can be related to these structural features. These structural components make possible much of the uniqueness of the old-growth forest in terms of flora and fauna (composition) and the way in which energy and nutrients are cycled (function).

There are a number of definitions of old growth. Franklin et al. (1988) establishes numerous characteristics to define old growth; the stand characteristics vary by species. The Pacific Northwest Regional Guide (1984) defines old growth, also varying by species. Neither of these definitions could be used on this Forest when the planning process began; the 1976 inventory did not include enough information about understory and dead and down logs to allow a direct translation into either the definition from the Regional Guide or Franklin et al. (1986).

For the purpose of the draft and final EIS, the definition of old growth on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is designed to use the tree type and size information available in the 1976 vegetation inventory. The definition is: "stands containing mature and large sawtimber, with trees that are at least 21 inches in diameter at breast height (4-1/2 feet from the ground)." The mean age for mature large sawtimber on the Mt. Baker National Forest is 241 years; on the Snoqualmie National Forest it averages 267 years.

The most recent (1976) vegetation inventory for the Forest, updated to reflect harvest through 1988, indicates there are about 643,500 acres of old growth as defined above within the Forest. Approximately 232,500 acres (36%) are located in wilderness and not available for harvest. An additional 134,400 acres (21%) outside wilderness are considered unsuited for timber production. These lands are either withdrawn from timber production or are unsuited for timber production because of highly unstable soils and difficulty in reforesting the area.

In the final EIS, the Forest considered alternatives that protected from 411,000 to 563,000 acres of the inventoried old-growth acres, with 1st-decade harvests of old-growth ranging from approximately 42,000 acres to 12,000 acres. The amount of protected old growth includes the 232,500 acres of old growth in wilderness, and the 134,400 acres not suitable for timber production because of potential irretrievable or irreversible resource damage (a total of 366.900 acres). The remaining protected old growth includes that needed to meet wildlife and riparian management requirements (MR's) and allocations for other resource objectives that do not allow timber production.

In the selected alternative, about 503,000 acres of old growth are maintained in allocations not suitable for timber production, including 232,500 acres in designated wilderness, and 134,400 acres not suitable for timber production because of potential irretrievable or irreversible resource damage. Approximately 135,800 acres (21%) of old growth are not suited for timber production because of resource allocations such as wildlife habitat and riparian MR's, and unroaded recreation allocations. The remaining 140,800 acres (22%) are allocated to prescriptions allowing timber production.

The draft Forest Plan proposed to maintain approximately 337.000 acres of the 1976 inventory of old growth in allocations not suitable for timber production (e.g., wilderness, unstable land, regeneration difficulty, dispersed recreation, special areas, spotted owl habitat, mountain goat habitat, Research Natural Areas. etc.). No acres were allocated specifically for old-growth management for amenity value. Of the 196,000 acres of old growth included in the suitable land base, 43,794 acres would have been harvested in the 1st decade.

Franklin, J.F., K. Cromack, Jr., W. Denison, A. McKee, C. Maser, J. Sedell, F. Swanson, and G. Juday. 1986. Interim definitions for old-growth Douglas-fir and mixed conifer forests in the Pacific Northwest and California. USDA Forest Service, Research Note PNW-447.

After considering public comments about old-growth values, I have selected Alternative J, which maintains approximately 503,000 acres of old growth in allocations not suitable for timber production (e.g. dispersed recreation, special areas, spotted owl habitat, mountain goat habitat, Research Natural Areas, etc.) No areas are specifically allocated for old-growth management for amenity values

Old-growth and mature forest inventories are being updated on the Mt. Baker- Snoqualmie as quickly as possible, to reflect new concepts of older forest values and importance The new inventory, is structured to allow the use of a variety of definitions of old growth based on a variety of vegetation characteristics (not just size of trees, as required by the current inventory) to determine the acres of old growth. With the completion of the new inventory, the Forest will use the Regional Guide definition of old growth and compare the old growth information in the Plan with the new old growth information. If necessary, adjustments to allocations and standards and guidelines related to old growth will be made by amendment to the Plan.

As more complete information about old-growth on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie becomes available, it will be shared with the public. My current decision about the amount of old-growth to maintain for the future could be reviewed in light of the updated inventory information. At the end of the 1st decade, over 525,000 acres of the 1976 inventory old-growth is expected to remain.

Based on the information I have available today, the 503,000 acres of widely dispersed and varied old-growth stands in allocations not suited for timber production should adequately preserve representative old-growth forest types on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie in the future. While I have chosen to manage some areas containing old growth on extended rotations to meet a variety of resource objectives, I have not elected to “manage” old-growth stands solely for their intrinsic values by extending rotations because of the silvicultural uncertainties about this technique. Some limited trials may be conducted to determine whether silvicultural treatments can be used to hasten development of old-growth characteristics in some of the Forest’s younger stands. Additional information about old growth on the Forest can be found in the final US. Chapter III, “Old Growth” and Chapter IV, “Diversity, Vegetation.”

Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

A public issue and management concern related to the old-growth issue is the maintenance and/or enhancement of diversity of plant and animal communities within the objectives of multiple use management. There is increasing recognition within the scientific community that ecosystem diversity is important, this issue also received considerable public comment. This issue focuses not only on the desirability of maintaining wildlife populations, but on levels of management needed to provide both the quantity and adequate balance of habitats for various species.

The Forest provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including four Federally listed threatened and endangered species. The variety of elevation, aspect, soil depth, climate, and vegetation create a naturally diverse mosaic of habitats within the Forest boundary. An important facet of this issue is the distribution and protection of suitable habitat to ensure species viability through genetic exchange.

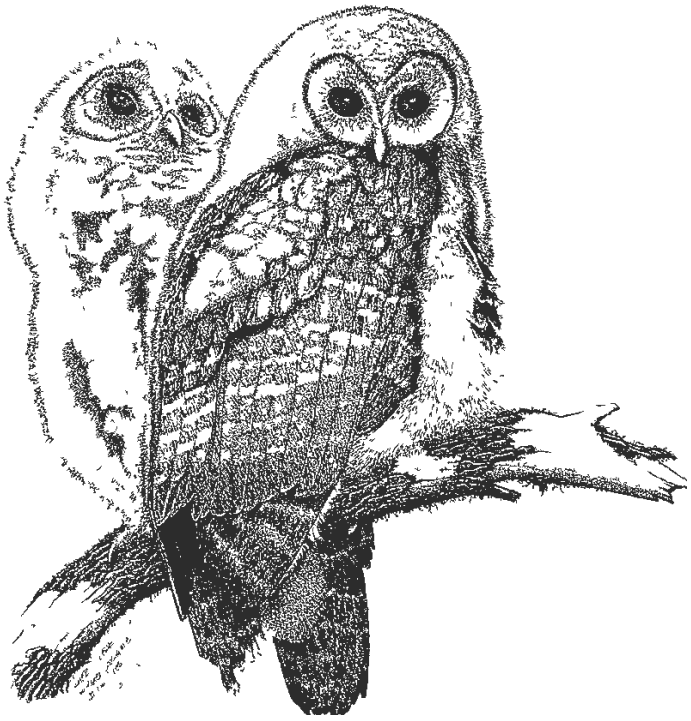
Many respondents to the draft EIS believed national forest management should focus on wildlife. State Department of Wildlife officials, individuals, environmentalists, hunters, and recreationists have expressed concern for the population and habitat needs of all wildlife species, including big game such as deer, elk, and mountain goat. Many other individuals and timber industry groups are concerned that the Forest is unnecessarily setting aside large amounts of forest land for species that may be more adaptable than thought. Many comments received on the draft EIS expressed the feeling that those species adversely affected by timber activities would be protected in lands

currently unavailable to timber production, such as wilderness and dispersed recreation areas. Numerous other comments received on the draft EIS expressed concerns that timber production activities have detrimental effects on species that are dependent on mature conifer forests. Cavity-nesting species are harmed by removal of trees that provide snags and hollow trees.

All management activities will protect habitat values for listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and species proposed for listing. The Forest Plan, Chapter IV, provides direction consistent with the Endangered Species Act and recovery plans for listed species.

Since the draft EIS was released, several actions have taken place regarding the northern spotted owl which influence how I will provide for the needs of this species on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest First, a Supplement to the EIS for an Amendment to the Pacific Northwest Regional Guide was issued in July. 1988. The December 6, 1988, Record of Decision for the Supplement identifies standards and guidelines for spotted owl habitat management. The analysis in the Supplement considered the conflicting views and scientific information of others. It provided new criteria for establishing “Spotted Owl Habitat Area” (SOHA) networks on forests in Washington and Oregon, including the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. While the draft EIS considered a total of 1,000 acres for each SOHA on the Forest, the Supplement now requires management or dedication of 2,200 acre SOHA’s and a network of habitat areas to ensure distribution of spotted owls across the Forest.

Second, on April 28, 1989, the FWS announced its intention to develop a proposal to list the northern spotted owl as threatened throughout its range. On June 23, 1989, a proposal to list the northern spotted owl was published in the Federal Register. The FWS is expected to decide if the northern spotted owl will be listed as a threatened species sometime in the summer of 1990.



Finally, Section 318 of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 1990, Public Law 101-121 which expires September 30, 1990, directed additional interim habitat protection for the spotted owl. (A SOHA is to include 2,600 acres on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.) It also provided that the December 8, 1988, Record of Decision accompanying the Final Supplement to the EIS for an Amendment to the Pacific Northwest Regional Guide, be reviewed and revised as appropriate by September 30, 1990. Any new information gathered subsequent to the issuance of the Record of Decision as well as the Interagency guidelines for conservation of northern spotted owls developed by the Interagency Scientific Committee are to be considered in this review.

This committee, chaired by Dr. Jack Ward Thomas, was appointed by the Chief of the Forest Service and the Directors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service. Recommendations by the Committee were made on April 4. 1990. Those recommendations are under consideration by the Chief of the Forest Service and any decisions related to those recommendations that affect the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest will be incorporated into the Forest Plan by amendment.

I have chosen not to conference with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the spotted-owl habitat provisions in the Forest Plan. Rather, I am directing the Forest Supervisor to ensure that the requisite conferencing with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is done on a project-by-project basis. As new information about spotted owl needs becomes available, i.e., through the Interagency Scientific Committee or through revision of the Supplement as mandated by Section 318 of the 1990 Appropriation Act, the Forest Plan may be amended to comply with new standards and guidelines to ensure population viability of the species. Listing of the owl as a threatened or endangered species may also result in an amendment to incorporate new management direction for the owl. Appropriate consultation or conferencing actions will then be taken.

After consideration of public comments and federal and state agency concerns about spotted owl population viability, I have decided to implement the selected alternative which establishes a network of 76 spotted owl habitat areas. This level of habitat protection meets Supplement guidelines. Slightly more than 40% of the network sites are known to have been occupied by spotted owl pairs in the last five years; 82% are known to have had one or more spotted owls. Each of these SOHAs has been expanded to 2,600 acres for Fiscal Year 1990 to comply with the provisions of Section 318.

The spotted owl network consists of dedicated SOHAs, habitat in wilderness, and other habitat in management areas without scheduled timber harvests. The selected alternative will maintain about 94 % of the roughly 500,000 acres of identified suitable spotted owl habitat on the Forest to the end of Decade 1. This network is distributed throughout the Forest and takes into account both suitable habitat and location of known spotted owls. Refer to the final EIS, Chapter III and the Forest Plan, Chapter IV for further discussion of spotted-owl direction.

I have decided to provide habitat for a wide range of species, not limited to those proposed or listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as threatened or endangered. I will accomplish this through utilization of the best current information on habitat needs of Management Indicator Species. This decision meets requirements of laws and regulations that govern protection of wildlife habitats.

In both the draft EIS and final EIS, allocation of lands were made to emphasize the protection, maintenance, and/or improvement of wildlife habitat. Specific allocations were made for 1) habitat for old-growth dependent species such as the northern spotted owl; 2) habitat for mature and old-growth forest dependent species such as the pine martin and pileated woodpecker; 3) riparian dependent species and fish habitats; 4) deer and elk habitat; 5) mountain

goat habitat; and 6) threatened and endangered species habitat (specifically the northern bald eagle). The acres allocated for these habitats are in addition to habitat that exists within other allocations that do not specifically emphasize wildlife or wildlife habitat.

In the draft EIS, the range of acres allocated specifically for wildlife habitat ranged from about 84,000 acres to 313,000 acres. The preferred alternative in the draft EIS allocated 104,000 to wildlife habitat emphases. The final 518 had alternative allocations for wildlife habitat ranging from approximately 115.000 acres to 345,000 acres. The increased acres in all alternatives in the final EIS reflect changes in spotted owl habitat requirements discussed above as well as changes brought about in response to public comments on the draft EIS.

After considering the public comments concerning all aspects of wildlife and wildlife habitat, I have selected Alternative J which allocates 174,000 acres specifically to the protection, maintenance, and/or improvement of wildlife habitat above and beyond that provided in other allocations. In the selected alternative, the following wildlife habitat allocations are made:

54,200 acres for northern spotted owl and associated species;
19,300 acres for pine martin, pileated woodpecker and associated species;
47,000 acres for riparian dependent species and fish habitats;
24,000 acres for deer and elk habitat;
17,100 acres for mountain goat habitat: and
2,800 acres for northern bald eagle habitat.

The marbled murrelet, a small robin-sized sea bird that nests in mature and old-growth habitat within 30-40 miles of the coast, has recently become a species of interest. However, little information about its habitat needs is available. For the plan period (10-15 years) I believe the mature conifer areas, the SOHA's and other areas that contain mature and old-growth habitat such as riparian areas, dispersed recreation areas, and Special Areas will provide sufficient habitat for the marbled murrelet. As additional information about the habitat needs of this species becomes available, the Forest Plan can be modified to incorporate it.

ISSUE 4: American Indian Religious and Cultural Use

Questions surrounding this issue include:

- What policy and management direction is needed to comply with the Native American Religious Freedom Act and various treaties?

- How can inventoried religious and cultural use areas be protected within the objectives of multiple use management?

In 1981, an inventory of religious use, practices, and localities on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest was completed. Over 300 cultural use areas and sites were identified, totaling nearly 450,000 acres or 26 percent of the net Forest acres. About 34 percent of these areas are in designated wilderness. Some sites cover less than one acre; other larger areas average between 3,000 and 15,000 acres. Use-areas and sites are located throughout the Forest but are concentrated in the northern half.

The inventoried use areas can be placed in five broad categories: cedar sites, ceremonial flora, spirit sites, legendary sites, and cemeteries and archaeological sites. There is a wide variation in compatibility between types of management activities and categories of religious, ceremonial, and cultural use.

Since the completion of the 1981 inventory, the Forest has initiated a consultation process with the Tribes. When proposed projects fall within an inventoried use-areas, the proposed activity is reviewed in detail with representatives of the Tribe(s) which may be affected. As more management activities are proposed, there is the potential for increased conflict.

It is my decision to implement the selected alternative which ensures the availability of sites and areas within the Forest for religious and ceremonial use by American Indians. This availability is assured by including allocations in the selected alternative that prevent development and limit access in some parts of the Forest. For religious and cultural sites and areas that occur in allocations where development may occur, the Plan requires consultation with affected tribal groups to develop protection and mitigation measures when development threatens those sites and areas.

ISSUE 5: Recreation Opportunities

The two major questions raised about this issue included:

- To what extent can the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest provide recreation opportunities and how should they be managed?

- How many miles of trails should be provided and in what locations?

The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest contains some of the most scenic areas in the Region Its proximity to the major metropolitan areas along Puget Sound and the variety of opportunities available is reflected in the continual growth of recreation use. Use exceeds 5 million RVD's (1989). It is expected that the demand for recreation on the Forest will grow through the end of the century.

The Recreation Opportunities issue includes several sub-issues or facets. The more significant ones are: developed recreation needs and opportunities; dispersed recreation needs and opportunities including roadless and undeveloped areas; trail needs and opportunities; and wilderness use and management.

Public comment on the draft EIS reconfirmed that recreation use - of all types - is a major public issue on the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie. One of the few areas of consensus, respondents agreed that recreation is a vitally important function of the Forest, and that more trails are needed. Opinion is divided on what types of recreation opportunities should be provided.

Many groups and individuals - including hikers, horse users, some off-road vehicle users, naturalists, wildlife advocates, and environmentalists - want to preserve the opportunities for unroaded dispersed recreation outside of wilderness. They prefer more remote, natural appearing recreation settings. National Forest lands are the major supplier of non-motorized dispersed recreation in the Puget Sound area Many other recreationists spoke to the need for better recreation access for young families and the elderly, more ORV areas, more snowmobile opportunities, and more campgrounds.

A majority of people commenting on the draft EIS want more trails. There was support from environmentalists and many recreation/commodity groups for the "Trails 2000" proposal, which included both new trail construction and reconstruction of existing trails. ORV and horse users want more trails open for their use. Many hikers feel that trails should be closed to motorized use.

Conflicts between recreation and other Forest resources are frequently mentioned. For example, the effects of clearcutting are generally not compatible with the values of many recreation users. Some users dislike the expanding road system needed for timber harvest, while others feet roads are important for their activities and access.

Many of the recreation attractions and opportunities are found within eight wildernesses; wilderness totals nearly 42% of the net Forest acres. A key issue is the level of management required to accommodate the high recreation demand within these areas, while protecting the wilderness resource. Some recreation and environmental groups, who fought for years to gain wilderness status for favorite areas, now find themselves debating the need for management actions within the wilderness, including limiting use. Important aspects of this issue are should additional trails be built and/or relocated to disperse recreation use away from heavily used areas; should roads that provide easy access to popular areas remain open to public use?

Some recreation uses are incompatible with each other; others cause resource damage because of the level or type of use. There is little public consensus regarding the quantity and type of recreation experiences the Forest should provide. The ability of the Forest to supply opportunities for all types of recreation and to resolve the problems of incompatible uses is a major issue to be addressed.

Developed Recreation

Developed recreation will, continue to be an important program on the Forest. By the end of Decade 1, demand for developed recreation will likely range from 2.8 to 3.6 million RVD's; this range is still below the existing practical developed capacity of the Forest. The Forest does experience overuse at some campgrounds on heavy-use weekends. By the end of the fifth decade, the demand range will be 6.7 to 8.2 million RVD's. New construction to meet this demand is described below.

The emphasis for the first decade will be placed on improving existing popular campgrounds. Also, those campgrounds that are non-fee and capable of a favorable cost/revenue ratio will be converted to fee status by the installation of facilities required to meet the criteria as fee sites. This is not expected to have a substantial displacement on the users of non-fee facilities.

A top priority will be rehabilitation of existing sites that currently need heavy maintenance. In Decade 1, an average of 10% of the existing units per year will be reconstructed, rebuilding most of the sites within the next 10 years. This equates to about 170 units, or four campgrounds per year on the Forest. After the first decade, it is expected the facilities would be in good enough condition that reconstructive maintenance could be reduced to 5% per year.

As early as the latter years of Decade 1, some new construction of developed campgrounds is anticipated, as more capacity may be needed. As many as 100 units (500 PAOT's) may be added This will most likely be expansion of existing campgrounds rather than new site development, but several new sites are proposed late in the first decade.

An additional emphasis will be construction/reconstruction of developed recreation facilities for the day user. Picnic sites, vistas, interpretation and nature walks are the types of recreation experiences anticipated to be in the highest demand. Recreation management will emphasize day-use facilities located in the Mountain Loop Scenic Byway, Mt. Baker Scenic Byway, Mather Memorial Parkway, and Stevens Pass Historic District. Planned construction for Decade 1 includes the completion of: Heather Meadows, Dalles Discovery Trail, Gold Basin Mill Pond, and Gold Creek Pond day-use sites. To increase day-use capacity, 8 to 12 day-use sites averaging 20 units each will be added in the next few decades. This will result in an 800-1200 PAOT increase in capacity.

All ski areas that have expansion capacity under approved Ski Area Master Plans are expected to add development facilities. Expansion should be commensurate with expected improvements in service, and permitted on the basis of actual public need. It is anticipated that some ski areas will have base-area expansion, particularly to enhance overnight and mid-week resort opportunities.

Public information and interpretative services will be expanded in the first decade of the Plan and thereafter to respond to public demand. Expansion will encompass staffing as well as facilities, displays, equipment, and published materials. Emphasis will continue towards sharing of information services with other agencies and partnerships with private outlets where possible. Emphasis will also be given to intensifying the Forests public outreach programs to allow certain segments of the public to become more familiar with recreation opportunities on the National Forest.

Dispersed Recreation

The assignment of land in the Plan will result in 15% of the total Forest acres (273,400 acres) being available for nonwilderness, unroaded dispersed recreation. These acres will provide the opportunity for 155,105 RVD's. The majority of these opportunities will be in the semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) class.

An additional 93,100 acres will remain unroaded during the first decade, although assigned to management prescriptions that project future development. This will result in an additional 51,205 RVD's of unroaded recreation, available through the first decade.

The primary management activities in the assigned unroaded recreation areas over the next decade will provide alternatives to impacting wilderness, and help reduce conflict between different recreation user groups in other areas. Increased trail construction, greatly increased reconstruction, and maintenance will aid in accomplishing this goal. Approximately 200 miles of new nonwilderness trail will be constructed in the first decade. Twenty miles of wilderness trail will be constructed. Another 493 trail miles will be reconstructed during the first decade.

Dispersed winter sports activities, such as cross-country skiing and snowmobiling, will continue to be encouraged. Where opportunities exists, both winter and summer dispersed recreation will be enhanced through timber sale activity by providing use sites, parking, trail access, and vegetative improvement. Additional Sno-Park facilities will be encouraged where the need is demonstrated.

Roaded recreation will occur on 37% of the Forest (530,550 acres). These figures represent the roaded natural and roaded modified ROS classes combined. This will provide the opportunity for 3,277,000 RVD's of recreational opportunities in a roaded environment in Decade 1. The capacity for roaded recreation well exceeds demand until Decade 4.

Commercial outfitters and guides will continue to be utilized as a method of meeting public demand, but new permits will be limited to a level that permits a balance between the individual non-guided user and those availing themselves of guide services.

Trails

The "Trail Management Plan" in Forest Plan Appendix E provides direction for the management of the Forest's approximately 1.384 miles of system trails. The direction for trail management attempts to reduce recreational conflicts between user groups. Whenever practical, these different uses (trait bikes, horses, hikers and mountain bikes) will be separated if conflicts cannot be avoided or minimized through public information and education.

Generally, trails will be constructed or reconstructed as needed for resource protection and to complement the objectives of the management prescriptions. When possible, through-trails will be routed away from areas of concentrated use, such as lakes and popular focal-points, to avoid unnecessary visitor encounters and environmental impacts.

Each trail will have a "primary objective" for management. While there may be other users allowed on any given trail, the trail standards and maintenance activities will reflect the standards for that primary objective and difficulty level that the trail is to be managed for.

The Forest policy is to restore trail mileage disrupted by management activities or to replace them with equal miles in the same general location. The intent is to not diminish the trail miles in the local area. The cost of this will be charged to the management program causing the dislocation. Loop trails will be favored. Special emphasis will be given to the planning and construction of low-elevation, snow-free trails. The presence of a trait will not limit the management options.

The reconstruction of existing trails will be emphasized over the construction of new trails, if budgetary constraints force prioritization.

The following types and amounts of trails are provided for in the Forest Plan:

- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail: There are 96 miles of this trail located within the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, along the crest of the Cascade Mountains.

- National Recreation Trails: The Forest has four trails totaling about 10 miles that have received national recognition for outstanding recreational values. An additional 13 trails, totaling about 37 miles, are proposed for National Recreation Trail status.

- Wilderness Trails: There are currently 580 miles of system trails in wilderness; this represents 42 percent of the total trail mileage on the Forest. Approximately 20 miles of new trail will be constructed within wilderness during the first decade of the Plan.

- Nonwilderness Trails: There are 803 miles of nonwilderness trails on the Forest. Of these, 425 miles are closed to motorized use. The current emphasis on hiker-only and horse trails will remain in effect. The Plan calls for the construction of 134 miles of new trail outside of wilderness to provide alternative recreation opportunities to relieve overuse of wilderness trails.

- Cross-country Ski Trails: There are approximately 129 miles of these trails. Many additional miles of skiing opportunities exist on snow-covered Forest roads. Expansion of ski touring trails is anticipated in the first decade. Groomed trails (with a pre-set track) will also expand as demand grows and funds become available.

- Snowmobile Routes: The miles of roads and trails available for snowmobile use will vary from year to year based on weather conditions, wildlife habitat management, and logging activities Over 200 miles of Forest roads and trails will be available for this use. In addition, certain areas of the Forest, such as Easton Glacier, have been identified as unroaded snowmobile areas.

- Off-road Vehicle and 4x4 Routes: Four-wheel driveways are very low standard travel-ways to be used by short wheelbase vehicles. There are approximately 25.7 miles of this type of route available on the Forest. The most popular areas for this type of use are Naches Pass Wagon Road, Evans Creek ORV Area, and the Greenwater Drainage.

I have decided to implement the selected alternative which rehabilitates all, existing campgrounds in the next 10 years and emphasizes construction of day-use facilities, including: Heather Meadows, Dalles Discovery Trail, Gold Basin Mill Pond, and Gold Creek Pond day-use sites. Unroaded dispersed recreation opportunities will be increased through the allocation of 273,400 acres to unroaded recreation emphasis. Complementing the unroaded recreation allocation will be the construction of approximately 200 miles of trails outside wilderness in the next 10 years.

Wilderness

The 721,718 acres of wilderness on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest will be managed to preserve the areas' wilderness character for the use and enjoyment of visitors, and administered in a manner consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

The physical, social, and managerial settings within wilderness will be managed to meet standards set under Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC's) in the wilderness recreation spectrum (WRS). Five zones are established under the WRS, listed in the table below.

Wilderness Recreation Spectrum

Zone	Acres	RVD's
Transition	15,078	226,170
Trailed	49,015	183,806
General Trailless	457,000	114,250
Dedicated Trailless	207,930	14,945
Special Area	9,017	Not Estimated
Total	721,716	539,171

The overall wilderness management goal will be to reduce or eliminate the adverse effects associated with human use, when use approaches or exceeds the established LAC. Specific management actions will be undertaken at overused sites where LAC's are now exceeded, or where the level of use or impacts is approaching levels specified for that WRS class.

Several areas within wilderness presenting unique management problems, such as the existence of structures, RNA's, and a popular climbing route, are assigned to the special area WRS class. The intent of this class is to allow changes in management guidelines for unique situations; areas do not qualify for this class for administrative convenience in dealing with overuse. The historic lookouts at Winchester Mountain, Park Butte, Miners Ridge, Three Fingers, Green Mountain, and Granite Mountain will be allowed to remain as non-conforming uses. The Coleman Glacier Climbing Route on Mt. Baker will have special LAC's in recognition of the unique opportunities present. An interdisciplinary team will examine the recreational use of Mt. Baker and recommend further refinements in these guidelines. The USGS Glacial Research Station in the Glacier Peak Wilderness and authorized electronic sites in wilderness will continue to operate under special use permit.

There are several large areas without trail access where cross-country trips, as long as a week, are possible. They provide for a pristine wilderness experience but generally occur in extremely fragile alpine areas that are vulnerable to overuse The intent is to manage these dedicated trailless areas to prevent overuse.

Standards and Guidelines permit using some naturally occurring fires (i.e. lightning caused) to accomplish wilderness vegetation management objectives such as maintaining vegetation diversity and allowing natural processes to prevail. The parameters under which these fires will be permitted to burn will be closely monitored and suppression actions will be taken immediately on those fires that exceed prescriptions. Under these guidelines, it is expected that most fires will be less than 10 acres in size, though it is possible that once every 20 years or so, an individual fire may approach 1000 acres in size. It is expected that approximately 75 acres per year will be burned where naturally occurring fires are used to accomplish wilderness vegetation management objectives No areas have been identified where planned, human-induced prescribed burning is needed to modify fuel accumulations to meet wilderness fire protection needs.

I have decided to implement the selected alternative. Under the direction of the selected alternative, the 721,718 acres of wilderness will be managed to reduce or eliminate the adverse effects of human use.

ISSUE 6: Wild and Scenic Rivers

- How should the potential wild and scenic rivers of the Forest be managed and their values protected?

There is one federally designated Wild and Scenic River on the Forest (the Skagit, designated in 1978). In the draft EIS, the results of an eligibility study of other rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System were presented. That study found five of 47 studied rivers to be eligible for designation. The preferred alternative in the draft EIS further dictated the study of those five rivers to determine if they were suited for designation.

There was considerable public comment on the DEIS eligibility study, plus support for many more miles of wild and scenic rivers than recommended for suitability study in the draft EIS. There was also some opposition to more designation.

Between draft and final plans, eligibility criteria were re-evaluated which resulted in additional rivers being found eligible. A total of 51 rivers were identified and studied for their eligibility and 47 of these were determined to be eligible. There was public and other agency involvement in this process. Suitability studies for all 47 rivers were also completed, again in response to public comment on the draft.

As a result of these studies, it is my decision to implement the selected alternative which found 30 rivers suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The rivers or portions of rivers listed on the next page will be recommended to Congress for designation. Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan describes the segments recommended and the recommended classification (Wild, Scenic, or Recreational). This recommendation is a preliminary administrative recommendation that will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. The Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on designation of rivers to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Until Congressional action, the values contributing to a rivers particular classification will be protected on National Forest lands. Forest lands in the 1/4 mile corridor on each side of the 30 suitable rivers will be managed to maintain the rivers' eligibility. Standards and guidelines for managing suitable rivers are provided in the Forest Plan, Chapter IV.

Included in my recommendation for Wild and Scenic River designation is the North Fork Nooksack River. Located on the North Fork Nooksack, studied under Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and recommended for Recreational designation, is a segment of river on private land that contains a hydroelectric facility owned and operated by Puget Sound Power and Light. The Forest's suitability study found the continued presence and operation of this facility would not have a direct and adverse effect on the values for which the river would be established as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This facility has been in place since the early 1900's and has never been licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This project is currently being considered for licensing by FERC. It is our opinion that FERC is not precluded from licensing this project prior to Congressional action on this recommendation because the river is being evaluated by the Forest Service under authority of Section 5(d) of the Act and the project is on private land.

Rivers Recommended for Inclusion in the National Wild And Scenic River System

North Fork Nooksack	West Cady Creek
South Fork Nocksack	South Fork Skykomish
Bell Creek	Tye River
Baker River	Miller River (to fork)
Noisy Creek	West Fork Miller River
Diobsud Creek	East Fork Miller River
Illabot Creek	Foss River (to fork)
Buck Creek	West Fork Foss River
Downey Creek	East Fork Foss River
White Chuck River	Deception Creek
North Fork Sauk River	North Fork Snoqualmie River
Boulder River	Middle Fork Snoqualmie River
South Fork Stillaguamish	Taylor River
North Fork Skykomish	Pratt River
Troublesome Creek	White River

ISSUE 7: Management of Municipal Watersheds

- What activities should be permitted within municipal watersheds?

- What measures should be taken that will maintain or enhance water quality?

Maintaining high quality water is an objective of many people and agencies, including: state and federal agencies, municipalities, fish and some wildlife interests (Indian tribes, sports groups, and some recreation and environmental groups), and the State fisheries agency. These interests believe that timber harvest, road construction, mining, and some recreation activities are detrimental to water quality, primarily due to sedimentation and pollution. Most of the above interests support actions to limit, restrict, or prohibit developmental activities in the watersheds.

Municipalities are concerned that increased access and recreation use will result in the need to install filtration facilities to assure potable water to the consumer.

Timber and energy industries, rockhounders, plus a number of hunters feel that development can occur and any adverse impacts to water supply and quality can be mitigated. They believe that limiting or prohibiting activities unduly restricts the industry's ability to maintain or increase supplies of timber, electric power, and minerals. Hunters feel that big game populations could actually be enhanced with controlled hunts in the watersheds.

Significant portions of the watersheds supplying the cities of Seattle, Bellingham, Everett, and Tacoma are located on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Water is also provided for a number of smaller municipalities, ski areas, and other recreation sites. About 136,400 acres, (7.9 percent of the Forest) supplies municipal water to 1.4 million people. Water quality is high; only one municipality filters water, others use only disinfectant.

Currently, a wide range of activities occur within the municipal watersheds. Some watersheds have not been accessed by roads and remain primarily in a natural condition. Other watersheds have been developed, with extensive timber harvesting and road construction. Recreation is permitted or encouraged in some watersheds; in others, poor access and municipal opposition has limited recreation opportunities.

It is my decision to implement Alternative J which continues the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements in effect for these watersheds. In the case of the Cedar River Watershed, the existing Cooperative

Agreement will be renegotiated to reestablish the goals and objectives for' that watershed. Until a new agreement is established, no new land exchanges affecting national forest land will occur. Pending the new agreement, the 1962 Cooperative Agreement remains in effect.

ISSUE 8: Effects of Timber Management and Related Activities

- What management direction is needed for timber harvest and road construction activities to benefit or maintain the quality of other resources?

Environmentalists, Indian Tribes, State Fish and Wildlife agencies and some recreationists are concerned about the effects of timber harvest and related road construction on other resource outputs and uses, such as fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, scenery, and dispersed unroaded recreation. There are approximately 1,500 stream miles and over 12,000 acres of lakes on the Forest that serve as both seasonal and year-round spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous and resident species.

The timber industry and businesses who depend on these industries believe that Forest Service management is too responsive to these other resource needs and place unnecessary limitations on timber harvest activities that reduce supplies and/or increase costs. Concern for the hydrologic cumulative effects of management activities has increased since the DEIS was released.

Management for the commercial production of timber includes a number of activities: road construction and/or reconstruction, timber harvest, preparation of the land for planting seedlings, possible thinning, fire, insect and disease control, et cetera. These activities have direct and indirect effects on other resources, including: fish and wildlife habitat, recreation uses, cultural values, and soil and water. Also, recreation opportunities are changed, and the visual condition of the Forest changes. The visual impact of clear-cutting and toss of habitat for some wildlife species is a major concern of environmentalists, wildlife advocates, and some hunting interests.

Each step in the process of timber harvesting, including road construction, may have a number of short-term and long-term impacts. Timber harvesting may enhance elk habitat (there is increased forage in clearcuts), but reduce the visual quality and the amount of wildlife habitat available for species dependent on mature conifer forests.

The Forest Plan establishes allocations and standards and guidelines that ensure the scenic values of the forest are protected through the use of the Visual Resource Management program. The Plan also provides for necessary habitat for wildlife through allocations and standards and guidelines to protect habitat values and the establishment of means to meet wildlife management requirements.

In preparing the draft EIS, the Forest recognized the need to develop ways to meet the riparian area and water quality management requirements set forth in 36 CFR 219.23(d) and 219.27(f).

For forest planning, riparian areas were evaluated and modeled as average widths by stream class. For Class I and II streams, the average width of riparian areas is considered to be 200 feet on each side of the stream. For Class III streams, the average width on each side of the stream is generally 100 feet. Riparian areas for lightly incised Class III streams were determined to be approximately 10 feet on each side of the stream. The determination of these average widths was made based on an evaluation of past management practices in streamside zones and the effects of those activities. Actual widths and boundaries of riparian areas will be determined during project planning. Those boundaries may be greater or lesser that the averages shown above.

During preparation of the DEIS, the Forest developed allocations and standards and guidelines that addressed the riparian area management requirements. The Forest also recognized the need for a process to address hydrologic cumulative effects in a way that was responsive to the riparian and water quality management requirements. However, no methodology was identified that could be directly adopted to develop such a process for the Forest. As a result, in the draft EIS, while standards and guidelines were developed to respond to riparian area management requirements, consideration of hydrologic cumulative effects on water quality management requirements were limited to focusing on: 1) identifying the major causes of adverse cumulative effects on water quality and/or quantity; and 2) identifying watershed potentials for unacceptable adverse cumulative effects.

In response to the draft EIS, the management of riparian areas and fish habitat, and the cumulative effects of management activities on fish/fish habitat were raised as major concerns by individuals, Indian Tribes, and State and Federal agencies. There were a total of 117 substantive comments from the public on fishery resources; 66 of these comments directly or indirectly addressed cumulative effects of forest practices on fishery and water quality values. In addition, 60 of the 75 substantive comments regarding the management of riparian areas were directed to impacts or effects to riparian values from forest management activities over space and time. The general public comments also included a number of comments in this area, including; “cumulative effects analysis for fish is inadequate;” “cumulative effects of forest activities on watersheds and water resources are not addressed;” “need more MMR’s for soils, watershed;” and “protect vital watersheds.”

There were two predominant areas of concern: the relationship between timber management activities (harvesting, road construction) and the viability of fish and fish habitat. (For example, what are the effects of sedimentation and bedload movement generated by Forest management activities to on- and off-Forest fishery resources, over space and time?) A second area of concern was the effectiveness of Best Management Practices to protect and maintain fish habitat and riparian areas, and the effectiveness of fish habitat restoration/improvement as a measure to mitigate the effects of forest management activities, over space and time. In one section of their input, The State strongly recommended, in place of BMP’s, the need for MR’s be developed for fish, in order to provide strengthened Forest-wide requirements for the protection of habitat.

In the analysis and evaluation of comments on the draft EIS, the Forest reconfirmed that the standards and guidelines developed in the draft EIS to meet the riparian management requirements were appropriate. The Forest also identified the need to develop, prior to issuing the FEIS and Forest Plan, ways to ensure that hydrologic cumulative effects did not violate the water quality management requirements.

In development of the Forest’s hydrologic cumulative effects analysis process, various strategies and actions were employed to insure that adequate ways of meeting the riparian and water quality management requirements were

the end result of that analysis. Included were additional public consultation, a literature search and work to determine if predictive models to determine hydrologic effects on westside Cascade watersheds were available. No suitable model was found, and the Forest proceeded to develop a Forest-specific process (discussed in detail in Appendix K of the final EIS). Because no predictive model was found to tie sediment production to fish habitat capability, fisheries were included as a major component of hydrologic cumulative effects analysis. The procedure to address hydrologic cumulative effects considered alt watersheds, and was applied in alt alternatives (except Alternative NC). It's intent, again, was to insure that effects of management activities prescribed by the Forest Plan meet the water quality and riparian management requirements established in 36 CFR 219.

During the development and application of the process in the summer and fall of 1989, meetings were held with State and Federal agencies, timber industry representatives. members of the academic and scientific communities, and representatives of environmental groups. The purposes of the meetings were to describe the process being used, solicit reactions to the process, and identify opportunities to improve the process.

The meeting with timber industry representatives created considerable interest and apprehension on their part as expected. In a letter dated October 6, 1989, they stated their understanding of the issues that were presented at the meeting and requested additional information that has been subsequently given to them. They also stated in their letter that they would submit written comments in the near future. No additional comments were received as of the date this Record of Decision was signed.

The meeting with members of the scientific community resulted in several useful comments. Comments made by the scientists at the meeting and subsequent written comments indicate they had a favorable impression of the procedure.

As a result of the various public meetings and reviews, the Forest concluded (and I concur) that the procedure (resulting from the hydrologic cumulative effects analysis) used to insure forest management activities do not violate water quality and riparian area management requirements is the best process available for this Forest at this time.

I have decided to adopt the selected alternative which will: 1) emphasize maintenance and/or improvement of water quality; 2) maintain adequate sources of large woody debris along streamsides and provide areas for future recruitment of material; and 3) emphasize improving and/or enhancing both anadromous and resident fish habitat. Management of the riparian areas in allocations suited for timber production will allow for timber harvest when riparian area objectives can be met. In addition to the previous riparian area standards and guidelines, the selected alternative also provides new standards and guidelines that incorporate limits on final harvest acres by watershed to meet the water quality and riparian management requirements.

Research in the area of hydrologic cumulative effects of forest management activities is receiving considerable attention by the scientific and academic community, industry, and State and County agencies. Any new research findings concerning hydrologic cumulative effects and forest management will be reviewed and if appropriate, incorporated into the process used by the Forest. The Forest will continue to work with the scientific and academic community to refine and further validate the hydrologic cumulative effects analysis process used in the Forest Plan. As additional experience and knowledge is gained in the area of hydrologic cumulative effects analysis, the Forest will review, evaluate, and if necessary amend the standards and guidelines developed as a result of that analysis.

My decision to implement Alternative J was made with full consideration for the concerns expressed about the effects of timber management and related activities, believe that unacceptable adverse effects will be prevented or mitigated through a number of actions discussed earlier in this Record of Decision. Included in these actions are the direction for management of roadless areas, old growth, fish and wildlife habitat, and application of the hydrologic cumulative effects analysis constraint.

ISSUE 9: Adjacent and Intermingled Lands

- How should National Forest lands adjacent to lands of non-federal owners be managed?

- What management activities should be conducted on National Forest lands that are located near private developments?

The land ownership pattern within and adjacent to the National Forest boundary and the management of intermingled Federal and Private lands is a major public issue.

A few environmental groups have proposed legislative land exchanges that would exchange high elevation, low timber site class private lands for low elevation, high site federal lands. Some of the major industrial timber land owners are supportive of these types of exchanges Independent mill operators and loggers who depend on National Forest timber and some public interest groups are strongly opposed to such exchanges, as the exchanges would further reduce timber supplies available to them.

Environmentalists, State Fish and Wildlife agencies, Indian Tribes and some sporting groups believe that management activities, such as timber harvest, should be delayed or deferred on National Forest lands to mitigate the cumulative effects of large-scale timber harvest on private lands that are intermingled with Federal tends. Independent mill operators and loggers are opposed to any delays or deferrals that would reduce timber supplies available to them

In many areas of checkerboard ownership, adjacent land owners have completely removed the old-growth timber (in approximately 640 acre blocks), leaving the timber present on National Forest land more vulnerable to wind-throw. Removing these blocks of old growth has also had the effect of reducing the amount of habitat available for wildlife species dependent on old-growth habitat. In areas of intermingled lands, the objectives and subsequent land practices of all owners affect the management of adjacent lands. Management of National Forest land affects adjacent lands of non-Federal landowners, and activities on non-Federal lands affect management of National Forest land.

Urban growth is steadily moving east toward the Forest boundary. Forest lands. regardless of ownership, are affected by this growth. Resources such as wildlife, water, and air do not recognize ownership boundaries, but they are directly impacted as shopping centers, subdivisions, and residences - plus an increased network of roads - spread closer to the Forest boundary. A question to be addressed: should National Forest land management practices be altered to compensate for these encroachments? Timber industry, adjacent land owners, County planners, and environmentalists are all involved in this concern.

A land ownership adjustment plan for the Forest was developed and included in the Forest Plan (Appendix G) to establish guidance for exchange, purchase, donation and transfer of land.

It is my decision to implement the selected alternative which incorporates standards and guidelines to maintain and protect resource values on national forest lands.

While the Forest Plan cannot address the management of off-Forest resources, it was developed with the recognition of the inter-relationships of the Forest lands and adjacent lands.

My decision t_0 proceed with the Forest Plan will not affect the land purchase program, which is authorized and funded annually by Congress. Land exchange opportunities are not expected to change. The exchange program will be utilized, where possible, to help attain desired future conditions in the Forest Plan.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Eleven alternatives were analyzed in detail in the draft EIS. The final EIS analyzes eight alternatives in detail. They include five from the draft EIS, one modified alternative from the draft, and two new alternatives (one of which is based on the Preferred alternative in the draft EIS). The final EIS eliminated five draft EIS alternatives from detailed study because few public comments supporting those alternative were received and the issues were better resolved in other alternatives. (See the final EIS, Chapter II). A new alternative is the Forest Service selected alternative. Alternative J, which falls within the decision space described in the draft EIS. Tradeoff analysis and environmental consequences are presented in the final EIS, Chapters II and IV.

Alternative NC (No Change)

The No Change Alternative has been developed in response to decisions made regarding an appeal, brought by the Northwest Forest Resource Council on May 19, 1986. The appeal centered on a decision by the Regional Forester to "require inclusion of minimum management requirements (MR's) in the Current Direction Alternative for each Forest Plan." The substance of the appeal was that a "true no-action alternative representing current management plans" was not included in Forest Plan draft EIS's.

The No Change Alternative is designed to represent the 1963 Timber Management Plans as amended, and consequently does not comply with all provisions of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture to implement NFMA.

The purpose of the Timber Management Plans was to determine potential yield for harvestable timber on the Forest and not to be an integrated resource management plan. Alternative NC would optimize timber production from suitable timber land determined by pre-NFMA criteria ASQ for Alternative NC would average 41.7 MMCF (203.8 MMBF) annually in the first decade. It is estimated that about 50% of existing roadless areas would be developed under this alternative. Management practices to protect water quality would be insufficient to meet state water quality standards. A PNV for this alternative was not estimated, as the Timber Management Plans did not include nontimber resources and would not be comparable to the other alternatives.

Alternative A (No Action)

Alternative A was developed to continue management of the Forest under the direction of previously existing plans (including the amended 1983 Timber Management Plans), policies and direction, updated to incorporate the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1978. This is the "No Action" alternative required by the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The goal of Alternative A is to provide maximum timber outputs while maintaining or exceeding current recreation, wildlife, fisheries, and visual resource outputs.

Annual ASQ for this alternative would be 31.0 MMCF (152 MMBF) in the first decade. Approximately 30% of the 403,000 acres of roadless areas would be assigned to development in this alternative. The remaining 70% would be retained for a variety of undeveloped uses including wildlife habitat, special areas, and unroaded dispersed recreation. Spotted owl habitat is inventoried, identified, and protected following the direction in the SFEIS amending the Regional Guide. Habitat capability would be provided for 108 pairs of spotted owls in Decade 1. Approximately 36,000 acres of land otherwise suited for timber production are in designated Spotted Owl Habitat Areas. Fifteen rivers totaling 287 miles (215 within the Forest) would be recommended for addition to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Alternative B (RPA)

The goal of Alternative B is to simultaneously produce high levels of timber, anadromous fish, commonly hunted species of big game, and dispersed unroaded recreation, as specified in the 1980 RPA Program.

Annual ASQ for this alternative would be 26.3 MMCF (128 MMBF) in the first decade. Approximately 34% of the 403,000 acres of roadless areas would be assigned to development in this alternative. The remaining 66% would be retained for a variety of undeveloped uses including wildlife habitat, special areas, and unroaded dispersed recreation. Spotted owl habitat is inventoried, identified, and protected following the direction in the SFEIS amending the Regional Guide. Habitat capability would be provided for 108 pairs of spotted owls in Decade 1. Approximately 79,000 acres of land otherwise suited for timber production are in designated Spotted Owl Habitat Areas. High timber goals preclude recommending any additions to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Alternative C

The goal of Alternative C is to emphasize primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation (accomplished through retention of existing roadless areas and, over time, reversion of some roaded areas to unroaded condition); protect scenery, fish, and wildlife habitat; and protect sites and areas important to American Indians for religious and cultural use.

Annual ASQ for this alternative would be 13.7 MMCF (87 MMBF) in the first decade. Approximately 7% of the 403,000 acres of roadless areas would be assigned to development in this alternative. The remaining 93% would be retained for a variety of undeveloped uses including wildlife habitat, special areas, and unroaded dispersed recreation Spotted owl habitat is inventoried, identified, and protected following the direction in the SFEIS amending the Regional Guide. Habitat capability would be provided for 115 pairs of spotted owls in Decade 1. Approximately 38,000 acres of land otherwise suited for timber production are in designated Spotted Owl Habitat Areas. All 47 eligible rivers totaling 806 miles (441 within the Forest) would be recommended for addition to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Five potential Research Natural Area additions are recommended - North Fork Nooksack Addition, Lily Lake, Perry Creek, Green Mountain, and Chowder Ridge.

Alternative G-Modified

The goal of Alternative G-Modified is to emphasize maintenance of natural ecosystems and diversity of native plants and animals, emphasize providing uses not found on private lands, and produce timber in a way that is consistent with the other goals and is non-damaging to soils.

Annual ASQ for this alternative would be 18.3 MMCF (89 MMBF) in the first decade. Approximately 9% of the 403,000 acres of roadless areas would be assigned to development in this alternative. The remaining 91% would be retained for a variety of undeveloped uses including wildlife habitat, special areas, and unroaded dispersed

recreation. Spotted owl habitat is inventoried, identified, and protected following the direction in the SFEIS amending the Regional Guide. Habitat capability would be provided for 115 pairs of spotted owls in Decade 1. Approximately 113,000 acres of land otherwise suited for timber production are in designated Spotted Owl Habitat Areas. All 47 eligible rivers totaling 796 miles (441 within the Forest) would be recommended for addition to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Five potential Research Natural Area additions are recommended - North Fork Ncoksack Addition, Lily Lake, Perry Creek, Green Mountain, and Chowder Ridge. Special Area designation is recommended for areas at Twin Sisters, Monte Cristo, Baker Lake, and Naches Pass.

Alternative H

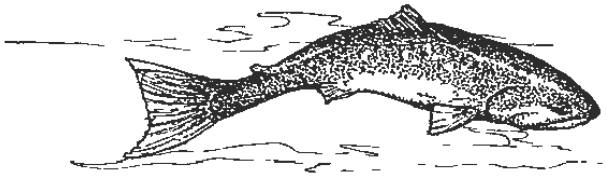
The goal of Alternative H is to provide an increased emphasis on unroaded recreation; protection of scenic values in the foreground and middleground of heavily traveled highway corridors; increasing big game populations; plus emphasis on timber production on tentatively suitable acres not assigned to other objectives.

Annual ASQ for this alternative would be 24.1MMCF (118 MMBF) in the first decade. Approximately 24% of the 403,000 acres of roadless areas would be assigned to development in this alternative. The remaining 76% would be retained for a variety of undeveloped uses including wildlife habitat, special areas, and unroaded dispersed recreation. Spotted owl habitat is inventoried, identified, and protected following the direction in the SFEIS amending the Regional Guide. Habitat capability would be provided for 111 pairs of spotted owls in Decade 1. Approximately 61,000 acres of land otherwise suited for timber production are in designated Spotted Owl Habitat Areas. Five rivers totaling 154 miles (71 within the Forest) would be recommended for addition to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System Five potential Research Natural Area additions are recommended - North Fork Nooksack Addition, Lily Lake, Perry Creek, Green Mountain, and Chowder Ridge.

Alternative I

Alternative I is a new alternative and was not displayed in the draft EIS. The goal of Alternative I is to emphasize those resources with an established price in the market place: timber production, anadromous fish, developed recreation, and minerals. In addition, emphasis is placed on enhancement of game wildlife and fish habitat and the development and maintenance of an extensive trail system to accommodate a wide variety of users on a year-round basis. Other resources are managed at levels that do not reduce the outputs from the market resources.

Annual ASQ for this alternative would be 26.6 MMCF (130 MMBF) in the first decade. Approximately 36% of the 403,000 acres of roadless areas would be assigned to development in this alternative. The remaining 64% would be retained for a variety of undeveloped uses including wildlife habitat, special areas, and unroaded dispersed recreation. Spotted owl habitat is inventoried, identified, and protected following the direction in the SFEIS amending the Regional Guide. Habitat capability would be provided for 108 pairs of spotted owls in Decade 1. Approximately 93,000 acres of land otherwise suited for timber production are in designated Spotted Owl Habitat Areas High timber goals preclude recommending any additions to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.



Alternative J (Preferred)

This is the Preferred Alternative. It is a new alternative and was not displayed in the DEIS. Beginning with the draft EIS Preferred Alternative (H), Alternative J was developed to respond to public comment and updated information. Differences between the draft and this Preferred Alternative include a considerable increase in trail mileage, an increase in the number of rivers recommended for addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; allocation of three Special Areas (Botanic, Scenic, and Recreation/Education); an increased emphasis on unroaded recreation; and greater protection of scenic values on travel corridors. Timber production is emphasized on suitable acres assigned to a timber harvest prescription; other resources will be managed at levels commensurate with the objectives of the alternative.

Annual ASQ for this alternative would be 22.4 MMCF (108 MMBF) in the first decade. Approximately 23% of the 403,000 acres of roadless areas would be assigned to development in this alternative. The remaining 77% would be retained for a variety of undeveloped uses including wildlife habitat, special areas, and unroaded dispersed recreation. Spotted owl habitat is inventoried, identified, and protected following the direction in the SFEIS amending the Regional Guide. Habitat capability would be provided for 111 pairs of spotted owls in Decade 1. Approximately 54,000 acres of land otherwise suited for timber production are in designated Spotted Owl Habitat Areas. Thirty rivers totaling 452 miles (276 within the Forest) would be recommended for addition to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Five potential Research Natural Area additions are recommended - North Fork Nooksack Addition, Lily Lake, Perry Creek, Green Mountain, and Chowder Ridge. Special Area designation is recommended for areas at Mather Memorial Parkway, Heather Meadows, and Sulphur Creek.

ALTERNATIVES WITH A HIGHER PRESENT NET VALUE

Present net value (PNV) is used to measure the economic efficiency of each alternative. PNV is the difference between the sum of the total discounted benefits of a course of action over some time period, and the total discounted costs of carrying out that course of action over the same time period. Benefits and costs used to calculate PNV are those which have a market price or which can be assigned a market price equivalent, and therefore PNV does not measure all factors that differ between alternatives.

The selected alternative has a PNV of $2258.8 million. The following four alternatives have higher PNV's:

Alternative	PNV (MM$)
B (RPA)	2343.2
I	2342.9
A	2283.5
H	2260.0

Alternative B has the highest PNV, because of its combined emphasis on both timber production and recreation. Noncash benefits are the major contributor to PNV on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Although recreation levels remain relatively constant over the span of alternatives, the type and value of recreation does vary. In Alternative B, timber benefits are increased by 15% over Alternative J and increased emphasis on roaded recreation make it's PNV just slightly higher than that of Alternative I. The tradeoff in PNV among Alternatives I, A, and H is more directly related to ASQ, and although A has the highest ASQ, PNV is decreased due to the intensive silvicultural activities associated with timber maximization.

Alternative B has a high emphasis on managing all tentatively suitable lands for timber production As a consequence scenic quality will deteriorate for almost all lands accessible by road. Other non-market amenities will be allocated only in areas not suitable for timber production.

Similar comparisons can be made for the other alternatives with higher PNV's. Alternative J strikes a more realistic balance between environmental concerns and economic returns. It provides better biological stability and provides greater overall benefits recognizing the importance of non-priced values such as visual resources, wildlife habitat, fish, and more primitive recreation activities.

Spatially, the selected alternative better addresses public concerns about recreation, wildlife and logging activities. These concerns will often mean forgoing timber opportunities for a more balanced activity, like reduced harvest rates in scenic viewshed, middleground, or deer and elk habitat.

These added resource provisions in the selected alternative either remove land from timber production or reduce the intensity of timber management on some lands, and this lowers PNV. For detailed comparisons of the alternatives, see the final EIS, Chapter II, "Comparisons of the Alternatives."

ENVIROMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferable alternative causes the least change to the biological and physical environments and protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. All alternatives considered in detail satisfy legal and environmental standards, except the No Change Alternative does not meet NFMA management requirements.

The environmentally preferable alternative is Alternative C. This alternative schedules less intense development activity, retains more acres in an unroaded and undeveloped condition, and programs less ground-disturbing activity during the next 10 to 15 years than in the Forest Plan.

Additional information on the environmentally preferable alternative and other alternatives considered is in the final EIS, Chapter II.

Alternative C emphasizes old growth, wildlife, fish habitat, and undeveloped, dispersed and unroaded recreation on the Forest. These are largely nonmonetary resources which generally do not have established market values. This alternative has an annual ASQ of 67 MMBF (13.7 MMCF), and a road construction program of 7 miles during the 1st decade. About 93% of roadless areas would be maintained in unroaded condition.

I did not select the environmentally preferable alternative because:

- It does not achieve a reasonable balance between concerns for maintaining environmental quality and satisfying demands of society for commodity and non-commodity outputs from the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

- The Forest Plan has a more balanced response to issues and concerns. It recognizes the needs for protection of old-growth habitats and values, unroaded dispersed recreation, and protection of water quality while still providing for commodity uses (e.g. timber production) at a higher level than is provided by the environmentally preferable alternative.

Alternative J, the Forest Plan, recognized and provides for landscape, resource, vegetation and animal diversity through land use allocations and management areas identified and displayed in the final EIS, Alternative J Map

Alternative J provides appropriate environmental safeguards at an acceptable direct economic cost. This alternative incorporates the perspective that the Forest Service is the trustee of the environment for succeeding generations. All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted. I believe Alternative J provides for the proper and continued use and development of Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest resources in a manner that maintains economic stability, yet retains local natural and cultural heritages, such as fish and wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, outdoor recreation opportunities, scenic quality, and American Indian religious and cultural use sites and areas.

This Forest Plan has been developed with public participation. which included involvement, coordination, and comments from federal, state and local agencies including the State of Washington; the affected Indian Tribes; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; representatives of county and city governments; industry groups; other special interest groups; and individuals.

Numerous efforts were made to ensure that the selected alternative considered the goals of other public agencies. Comments and letters from agencies were reviewed and analyzed extensively; numerous meetings and field trips were conducted with officials from other agencies and actions were taken to address their concerns.

I believe Alternative J is compatible with and complementary to the goals of other agencies and American Indian tribes. Coordination with many agencies, groups, and individuals will continue as projects are implemented.

I select Alternative J because, in my judgment, it maximizes net public benefit. The term “net public benefit” is necessarily subjective. Many people may disagree with this evaluation, and in fact, therein lie the controversies surrounding these decisions. Due to the controversial nature of the decisions I am making. I have shared with you, the reader, the factors I considered. I compared the selected alternative to the “environmentally preferable alternative” and to alternatives with higher present net values. I recognized that “environmentally preferable” is also a subjective term, and explained the basis for that subjective conclusion.

In arriving at these decisions, I have been thoroughly briefed on the Plan and alternatives presented in the FEIS. I gave particular attention to how the selected alternative responded to public issues and management concerns. In my judgement, Alternative J maximizes net public benefits and best responds to the issues. It balances adequate protection of the environment with production of both monetary and non-monetary resource outputs.

SECTION IV

IMPLEMENTATION

SCHEDULES

The Forest Plan will be implemented through identification, selection, and scheduling of projects to meet its management goals and objectives. These projects are displayed in the Forest Plan, Appendices A through K.

Project schedules will be available for review at the Ranger District Offices and Supervisor's Office. Schedules of possible projects will routinely change as projects are implemented or removed from the lists for other reasons, and as new projects take their place. Adjustments to schedules may occur based on results of monitoring, budgets, and unforeseen events.

The Forest Plan provides direction in the form of goals and objectives, standards and guidelines, monitoring requirements, and probable scheduling of management practices. It does not cover projects on specific sites except in a broad manner. Each proposed project will be subject to site-specific analysis in compliance with NEPA. This process may result in a decision not to proceed with the proposed project, even though the project is compatible with the Forest Plan.

The Forest Plan's scheduled projects are translated into multi-year program budget proposals. The schedule is used for requesting and allocating funds needed to carry out planned management direction. Upon approval of a final budget for the Forest, the annual work program will be updated and carried out.

The Forest program of work will implement management direction of the Forest Plan Outputs and activities in individual years may differ significantly from those shown in Forest Plan, Chapter IV, depending on final budgets, new information derived from updated inventories and monitoring, and any future amendments or revisions of the Forest Plan.

All timber sales offered after issuance of the Forest Plan will comply with direction contained in it. Timber Sales now under contract will be administered under provisions of existing contracts. Changes to existing timber sale contracts may be proposed on a case-by-case basis where overriding resource considerations are present.

The Forest Plan incorporates the Pacific Northwest Region's FEIS for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation. In implementing the Forest Plan through project activities, the Forest will comply with the Record of Decision issued by the Regional Forester dated December 8, 1988, and the Mediated Agreement of May, 1989. Use of all vegetation management techniques is allowed only when other methods are ineffective or will unreasonably increase project costs. Emphasis must be on prevention and early treatment of unwanted vegetation and full public involvement in all aspects of project planning and implementation. Information about the vegetation management FEIS, ROD, and Mediated Agreement are available at the Forest Supervisor's Office.

The Forest Plan will be implemented 30 days after the Notice of Availability of the Forest Plan, EIS, and Record of Decision appears in the Federal Register.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Monitoring and Evaluation Program is the management control system for the Forest Plan. It will be used to provide information on progress and results of implementation. One result of monitoring will be an assessment of needs for amending or revising the Plan. Monitoring and evaluation are discussed in more detail in the Forest Plan, Chapter 5.

Monitoring is intended to keep the Forest Plan current and responsive to change. Monitoring and evaluation each have a distinctly different purpose and scope. Monitoring consists of gathering data, observations, and information. During evaluation, the data and information are analyzed and interpreted. This process allows determination of whether conditions are within the bounds and intent of Plan direction. Forest Plan monitoring is not a substitute for existing monitoring activities. Many activities are currently being monitored on the Forest to comply with administrative and legal responsibilities. (FSM - Admin. Review Procedures).

Monitoring and evaluation will provide information to:

- Compare planned to applied management standards and guidelines to determine if objectives are achieved (36 CFR 219.12(k)].

- Quantitatively compare planned versus actual outputs and services (36 CFR 219.12(k)(1)].

- Measure effects of prescriptions, including significant changes in land productivity [36 CFR 219.12(k)(2)].

- Determine planned costs versus actual costs associated with carrying out prescriptions [36 CFR 219.12(k)(3)].

- Determine population trends of the management indicator species and relationship to habitat changes (36 CFR 219.19(a)(6)].

- Evaluate effects of National Forest management on adjacent land, resources, and communities [36 CFR 219.7(f)].

- Identify research needs to support or improve National Forest management [36 CFR 219.28].

- Determine if lands are adequately restocked [36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(i)].

- Determine, at least every 10 years, if lands identified as unsuitable for timber production have become suitable (36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(ii)].

- Determine whether maximum size limits for harvest areas should be continued (36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(ii)].

- Ensure that destructive insects and disease organisms do not increase to potentially damaging levels following management activities [36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(iv)].

Results of evaluations will lead to the following types of decisions:

- Continue practice, no change necessary.

- Refer the problem to the appropriate Forest officer for corrective action.

- Modify the management practice through Plan amendments.

- Modify land designation through Plan amendments.

- Revise output schedules.

- Revise unit output costs.

- Revise the Plan.

Three types of monitoring and evaluation will be conducted:

- IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING - Implementation monitoring will determine if plans, prescriptions, projects, and activities are implemented as designed and in compliance with Forest Plan objectives and Standards and Guidelines.

- EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING - Effectiveness monitoring will determine if plans, prescriptions, projects, and activities are effective in meeting management direction, objectives, and the Standards and Guidelines.

- VALIDATION MONITORING - Validation monitoring will determine whether initial data, assumptions, and coefficients used to develop the Plan are correct; or if there is a better way to meet forest planning regulations, policies, goals, and objectives.

Evaluation of results of the site-specific monitoring program will be documented in an annual evaluation by the Forest Interdisciplinary Team. Any need for further action is recommended to the Forest Supervisor.

Actions directed by the Forest Supervisor could include one or more of the following:

- A determination that no action is needed.
- District Ranger(s) may be directed to improve application of management direction.
- Management direction for a particular piece of land may be modified as a Forest Plan amendment.
- The Standards and Guidelines may be modified as a Forest Plan amendment.
- The projected schedule of outputs may be modified as a Forest Plan amendment.
- The needed action may singly or cumulatively be so significant as to cause the Forest Supervisor to initiate revision of the Forest Plan.

If, through monitoring and evaluation, it is determined that management objectives cannot be achieved without violating the Standards and Guidelines, the plan will be amended. In amending the plan, one or more of the following can be changed; allocations, management prescriptions, projected outputs, or standards and guidelines.

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures will minimize or eliminate potential conflicts or adverse effects of implementation. Mitigation measures have been developed through interdisciplinary efforts and incorporated into the Forest Plan at different levels in several different ways.

The Standards and Guidelines and Management Area prescriptions in the Forest Plan, Chapter 4 are a fundamental and integral part of these measures, and as such they are a basic and essential part of the Forest Plan.

All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted (40 CFR 1505.2(c)).

The land use allocations play an important role in mitigation through separation of incompatible uses.

National Forest Management Act requirements were incorporated into the planning process and are reflected in land use allocations and Standards and Guidelines.

"General Water Quality Best Management Practices" (USDA 1988) are incorporated by reference under requirements of Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

Additional mitigation measures are developed and implemented at the project level, tiered to and consistent with the measures listed above.

AMENDMENT AND REVISION PROCESS

This Forest Plan may be changed either by an amendment or a revision. Such changes may be made as a result of monitoring or project analysis (see Forest Plan, Chapter 5). An amendment may become necessary as a result of situations such as:

- Recommendations of the Interdisciplinary Team based on their review of monitoring results.

- Determination that an existing or proposed permit, contract, cooperative agreement, or other instrument authorizing occupancy and use is not consistent with the Forest Plan, but should be approved, based on project level analysis.

- Adjustment of management area boundaries or prescriptions.

- Changes necessitated by resolution of administrative appeals.

- Changes needed to improve monitoring plans or information and assumptions used in the Plan.

- Changes made necessary by altered physical, biological, social, or economic conditions.

Based on an analysis of the objectives, guidelines, and other aspects of the Forest Plan, the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Supervisor shall determine whether a proposed amendment would result in a significant change to the Forest Plan. If the change is determined to be significant, the Forest Supervisor shall follow the same procedure as that required for development and approval of the Forest Plan. If the change is not determined to be significant, the Forest Supervisor may implement the amendment after appropriate public notice and compliance with NEPA. The procedure is described by 36 CFR 219.10(e) and (f), 36 CFR 219.12(k), FSM 1922.51-52 and FSH 1909.12.

As Regional Forester, I will approve significant amendments and the Forest Supervisor will approve "nonsignificant" amendments. The determination of significance must be documented in a decision notice and would be appealable under 36 CFR 217. A mailing list will be maintained to provide notification and invitation to comment on proposed amendments.

The amendment documentation will include as a minimum:

- A statement of why the Forest Plan is being amended (some possible reasons are mentioned above).

- The actual amendment will be described.

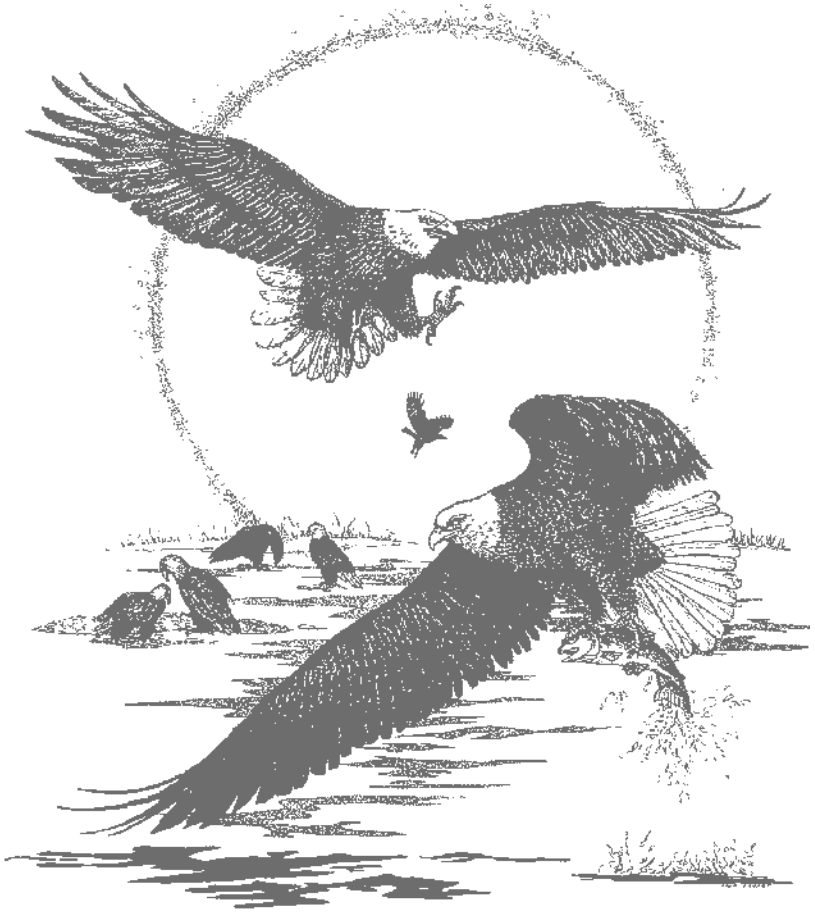
- Rationale for the amendment.

- A statement of significance related to FSM 1922.51. This is the NFMA significance and relates to changes to the Forest Plan.

- A statement of NEPA compliance (40 CFR 1500-1508, FSM 1950, and FSH 1909.15) regarding effects on the environment and how effects disclosed in the Plan EIS may change as a result of the amendment.

- A statement of appeal rights.

NFMA requires revision of the Forest Plan at least every 15 years. However, it may be revised sooner if physical conditions or demands on the land and resources have changed sufficiently to affect overall goals or uses for the entire Forest. If a revision becomes necessary, procedures described in 36 CFR 219.12 will be followed.



SECTION V

APPEAL RIGHTS

This decision may be appealed in accordance with the provisions of 36 CFR 217 by filing a written notice of appeal within 90 days of the date specified in the published legal notice. The appeal must be filed with the Reviewing Officer:

F. Dale Robertson, Chief
USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

A copy must be sent simultaneously to the Deciding Officer:

John F. Butruille
Pacific Northwest Region
USDA Forest Service
319 S.W. Pine
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97208-3623

The notice of appeal must include sufficient narrative evidence and argument to show why this decision should be changed or reversed (36 CFR 217.9).

Requests to stay the approval of this Land and Resource Management Plan shall not be granted [36 CFR 21 7.10(a)].

For a period not to exceed 20 days following the filing of a first level notice of appeal, the Reviewing Officer shall accept requests to intervene in the appeal from any interested or potentially affected person or organization [36 CFR 217.14(a)].

Decisions on site-specific projects are not made in this document.

The schedule of proposed and probable projects for the first decade is included in the appendices to the plan. Final decisions on these proposed projects will be made after site-specific analysis and documentation in compliance with NEPA.

I encourage anyone concerned about the Plan or Environmental Impact Statement to contact Doug MacWilliams, Forest Supervisor, in Seattle, Washington, 206-442-5400, before submitting an appeal. It may be possible to resolve the concern or misunderstanding in a less formal manner.

6/8/90

JOHN F BUTRUILLE
Regional Forester - USDA Forest Service
Pacific Northwest Region
319 SW Pine, P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97204-3623

Date

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